

ACSM Chapters - Speaker/Session Submission
September 9, 2019
Prepared for Heather Turner

Title: Challenging Autism with Exercise

Presenter: David Geslak, BS, ACSM EP-C, CSCS

Presentation Length: 90 – 120 minutes

Presentation Abstract:

Exercise is one of the most underutilized and cost-effective treatments for individuals with autism. In addition to the health-related benefits, research shows that exercise can increase attention span, reduce stress, enhance language development and reduce stereotypical behaviors for individuals with autism. While many in the fitness community do not know the research, others want to help but are intimidated of how to begin. David Geslak, who has trained professionals around the world – and created the ACSM/Exercise Connection Autism Exercise Specialist Certificate -, will teach participants visual strategies, exercises and structured routines so they can make a difference for this unfortunately growing community.

Presentation Details:

Purpose: Autism is the world's fastest growing developmental disability and exercise is proven to have a meaningful impact on the individual's health, quality of life and symptoms related to autism.

Also, "our National Survey of Autism Treatment Effectiveness, given to autism parents, found that exercise was the number 1 rated treatment overall, with a rating of 4.2/5, substantially higher than the 2nd highest rated treatment (physical therapy) with a 3.8/5." – Dr. Jim Adams, Arizona State University

The fitness community needs to be educated on the strategies, tools and protocols that need to be in place for this population to have success and make exercise apart of their

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life.

Presentation Details *continued*:

Objectives: Following the presentation participants will be able to;

- 1) Define The Five Components of Fitness for Individuals with Autism
- 2) Understand how to breakdown various exercises to accommodate the different learning styles of autism
- 3) Discuss and critique exercise research for the autism community
- 4) Will have a general understanding of autism, its signs and symptoms, and the benefits exercise can have.

Presenter Bio:

As a para-educator and Fitness Coordinator at a school for children with autism, David experienced first-hand the challenges of teaching exercise. By understanding that the students learn differently, he developed a system that has become a breakthrough in effectively teaching exercise. Twelve universities have incorporated his program into their Adapted Physical Education and Special Education Programs. As a pioneer in the field, David gives his insightful and inspiring presentations around the world, including, Egypt, Dubai, Russia, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Barbados, Canada, and Singapore. David partnered with the American College of Sports Medicine to create the fitness industries first educational certificate, Autism Exercise Specialist Certificate, to prepare professionals to engage and teach exercise to those with autism. He has a bachelor's degree in Health Promotion from the University of Iowa and he is an ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist, as well as, NSCA Strength and Conditioning Specialist.